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# Space Mixing

## Introduction

Digital media give us wide opportunities which reach much further than high technical quality of the image or the speed of sharing data. One of them is a different point of view at the reality, which – through the prism of a new tool – is perceived in a different way. Many artists, who are currently active on the scene of contemporary art, represent mixing, namely, connecting different formal measures; however, new tools in the works of new media and a new way of thinking about works of art along with a traditional model of a masterpiece and past tools are still represented.

Similar evolutions can also be seen in the artistic education. It is mostly visible in works presented by young artists, predominantly students. An artistic language also changes, as well as the dimension of presenting art, the model of a masterpiece, but mainly ways of perceiving. Contemporary technologies, the Internet and augmented reality give ample opportunities to an educated and conscious artist. Artistic education still teaches basic skills at creating a masterpiece, such as an ability to create, to think creatively, and how to convey a message by means of artistic expression. Similarly, it teaches how to communicate by using a new language in a new dimension. Sometimes the ability to use a virtual screen is as equally important as the knowledge of formal means which constitute a traditional work of art. In a manifesto published in 1990, Tamás Waliczky wrote: “If we use a computer according to the traditional way of thinking, [...] we will lose an awful lot of opportunities to create a brand new world”<sup>1</sup>. Waliczky sees technology as a new method of building reality and a way to understand it. As Lev Manovich wrote, computer generated pictures are not fragile or vague presentations of our reality, they are rather realistic presentations of a different reality<sup>2</sup>.

Chair of Interdisciplinary Art Creation has formed a programme whose aim was to combine classes where a new language as well as traditional methods of depicting the world would be used. Classes where different media infiltrate one another do not seem to divide art into disciplines. Common infiltration is even natural at such classes as autonomic drawing, Intermedia or animation.

The programme of a multimedia workshop seems to be unbelievably wide. First of all, in the scope of workshop

actions, we can establish a practical action (mainly), but also theoretical knowledge which is referred to as the subject. The range also refers to the complexity of products – works of art which are created at workshops; we meet projects ranging from very traditional ones, whose structure is built on a pattern of an old masterpiece, which has a compact, closed, linear structure, and these are graphics, traditional animation, film, and design. Workshops also offer solutions which have a more complicated structure, and resemble a hypertext, interactive media which engage the activity of a creator, such as interactive graphics, interactive multimedia installations, Web Art, WWW pages design, or the design of a virtual reality.

However, behind that complication on the level of a choice of ways of fruition the complexity of a choice of proper applications is also significant, and involves such important elements as language of an application or the aspect of sound. That interdisciplinarity of actions in the multimedia workshop is natural, and there is no need to understand a subject of widely known multimedia, digital graphics, cinema, conceptual art or animation as integrated in one definition. It is a natural answer to multithreading, multimedia or interactive art, which do not develop without the legacy of kinetic art, action art, or even drawing or traditional graphics.

## Fruition

Education should be directed to practical actions, with pressure on software as well as interesting conceptual solutions. Undoubtedly, one should not forget about a theoretical sphere and conscious connecting it with action. The examples given above illustrate a connection of different forms of articulation in artistic communication, such as text, sound, graphics, animation, video, virtual reality. Colligation of these many independent disciplines, or rather tools, gives birth to a new independent medium – Intermedium – which combines artistic disciplines which were once separated from each other. In our workshop they lead to a constant tie. In that case they become an extension of mixed media.

## Linear structure fruition

New means of presentation determined by new technologies give us unlimited opportunities. Thanks to them any creative actions can imitate reality perfectly well, but they can also create a new world, which does not resemble the real one. These two ways of creative action can be seen in shaping virtual reality, but also in animation. Connecting new technologies with new workshops is essentially important, or even the most important factor which is to maintain proper rates between them. Drawing is fundamental.

In artistic education directed to multimedia we should not disregard that basic, significant artistic medium. Paul Wells, the author of a book about animation, shares the same view, namely, he reckons that drawing is a necessary element in every process of creation<sup>3</sup>.

Drawing often plays an auxiliary role, for instance in animation, as a registration of current impressions, building storyboards, transcribing scenarios into a paper form. In subsequent phases of work creation the form and matter are synthesized, however, not necessarily, by using different techniques. In students' works, the role of drawing is a significant form of artistic expression. Even if students use a new tool, them-selves think "with their hand"<sup>4</sup>, while referring to a traditional background, thanks to which he/she has learned how to express himself/herself at the beginning of their process of creation. However, in a workshop entitled "Man and Machine", we can observe the opposite situation. Digital prints took drawings as their point of departure. The drawn and added elements made by either a pencil or paint have changed the work to a large extent.

Apart from drawing, it is also important for young adepts of the new media art to bear in mind classic means of artistic expression, and to comprehend compositional and dimensional means. While creating in the world of contemporary communication, perceptiveness and openness for the surrounding world is extremely important. That is why in the Interdisciplinary Department, students also create works requiring skills exclusively in printmaking, drawing and painting. Some of them were made on a big-sized area without a computer use, but with the help of various means of art expression. Such activities shape students' ability to plan the area, compose their work properly and also to develop a valuable skill at working in a group.

There are works created in a multimedia workshop, which are of a linear, constant character, based on



Fig. 1. Fire festival – drawing and painting action (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska), a defined scenario in which a traditional medium plays a decent role, especially in the process of creating an image or a form. In Anna Mihalikova's work, every single element which creates an animation is made of drawing of more or less intensely condensed surfaces. In works of such type, the new medium is limited to software, which makes static elements move, it is an end phase which integrates image and sound. Moreover, such rules in the creation of animations can also be seen in Adrianna Kwapisz's work. Her animation is enhanced with scanned elements of torn paper, or with elements ornamented in a digital environment. That work is a traditional presentation of drawing elements being moved. It refers to nature and is an example of an animation inspired by a given world. The form and movement resemble a classic sketch. It is a search for rhythm, pattern in which a multi-document form exists and they produce an ornamental action. In this work digital technology plays a role of an instrument, an artistic medium that integrates all of the elements that build the whole.

It is works only generated in a digital environment that are created, thus, it is important to define the use of an application, whereas it is not recommended when it is a program that defines the objects' ultimate form.

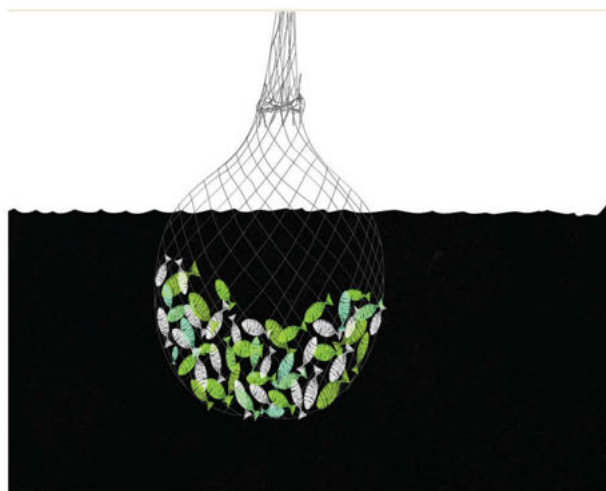
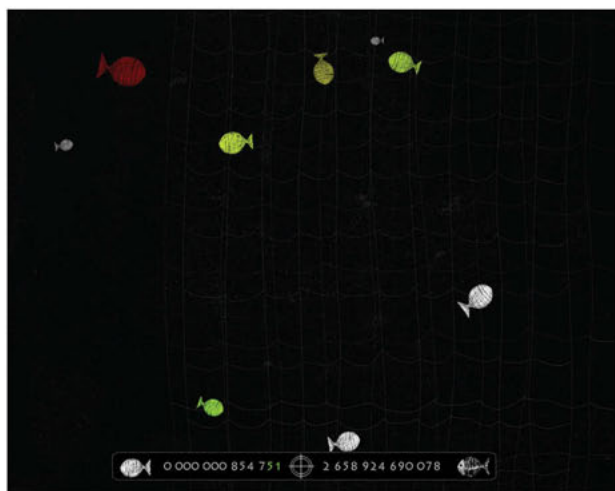


Fig. 2. Anna Mihalikova, *Rybosfera* (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska)



Fig. 3. Anna Kwapisz, *Landscape* (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska)

Grzegorz Dalek's, work where a little complicated story uses an extremely simple form, may serve as an example. The form should be simplified, it comes from a project of a work's format which is devoted to a small number of receivers, such as mobile phones. Shapes come from the rules of animation which underline a character's universal problem and his/her story. A faceless protagonist gives a wider spectrum of interpretation; however, it does not come from opportunities or limits which are given by a medium. If such thing happened, all works made with the use of a given tool or software would be extremely similar; it is otherwise though.

Moreover, camera work makes this animation interesting as it moves only horizontally, that is from right to left, thus producing a panoramic scenery, in which the action takes place. The character moves in a similar way. Reality in a given animation is enhanced with a new language of

creative expression, whereas the featured world is not reflected. The character is an abstract geometrical figure. Every single element in the scenery is a combination of simple geometrical forms. In such fruitions we can notice a different perspective than the one which is known from the real world, or even a lack of it. Neither the form nor the perspective does pretend to be the real one. The image's traditional frames fade as well as widen the dimension between them. "The profile seems to be released from the domination of the frames"<sup>5</sup>. To my mind, this way of thinking – thanks to screens, our contemporary frames, which are not limited by an existing chassis of our monitors, and the world beyond them – spreads towards eternity.

### Interactive fruitions

There are also many interactive works created in relation to the programme of the workshop of multimedia actions, in which we can define projects, portfolios or animations, whose structure is based on an interaction with a recipient, which establishes a multiplicity of solutions and endings of the same story. Marta Klejnot's work called "Interactive Cieszyn" is a city guide which is a combination of a few short animations, individual scenes, where the viewer can sweep from one scene to another with a click. Many students use interaction in a project of a portfolio, which is eventually very often put in their own websites. Monika Cichocka's portfolio project, especially its main page, is very graphic in its message. The concept of a portfolio is that of the workshop – after we have clicked, we can open an individual "drawer" and check out the content of the author's "chest of drawers". In such actions, which deter-



Fig. 4. Grzegorz Dalek, *Bus stop* (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska)



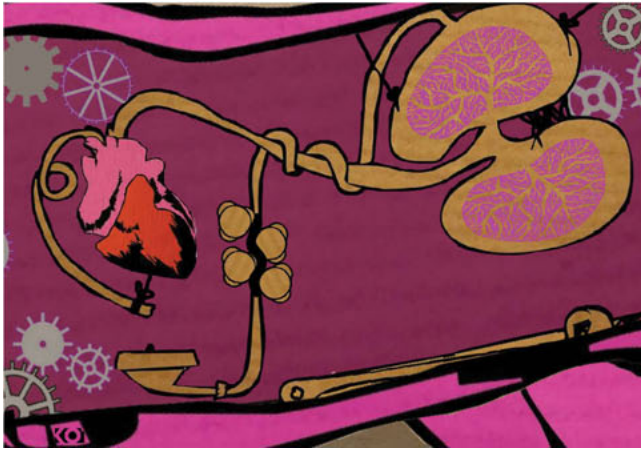


Fig. 5. Marta Klejnot, *Interactive Cieszyn* (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska) mine the elements of interactivity, the perception of the masterpiece and the idea of time change. Such works of art exist only in a particular time, when the viewer begins an interaction. They change only when they are actually looked at, and each time this relationship is established, the change occurs.

### Fruition on the margins of graphics and film

Graphics often becomes an opening image in multimedia fruitions. Then the movement, added to the image, becomes its new value. But it is not the main value in the image, as its texture, contrast, and composition play the most important role. Wojciech Pelc's film called "Black and White" shows a picture of contrasts. It is divided into two independent windows in a black frame. In both of the pictures we can see a woman and a man as independent beings who connect with each other during the film, and the upcoming frames integrate both forms into one. That image stuns mainly due to its extremely contrasting graphic form based on oppositions. Many works are created according to this style, and thus film, photography and graphics become a matrix for multimedia works.

Uniqueness of such forms rests upon the connection of two dimensions: the virtual one and a scan of traditional graphics or photography. Shows of such type are powerful

affectively, expression appears here in the shape of voicing thoughts in an externalized form. Symbolism of these forms expresses mental condition. This picture transcends the message that the video shows. Traditionally, films that are short of anecdote are linked with the movement of an experimental movie in Polish animation, the movement which seeks the essence of pure cinema. Works created in such convention featured images, unconventional captures, surmising points of view or distorted real things as freely connected with one another.

### Conceptual fruitions

There are many actions of a conceptual feature, where the final form is not important, it is a give-away of a thing as a final result of artistic action, it is only a mere result of previous experiences, a record of an action, sometimes a documentation of an idea itself. One of the works representing that kind of way is Karolina Kiczmer's "Private Duties". The work on the image was limited to the registration of a daily walk to the author's favorite places. The form that the film finally got, comes only from the experience as a whole, which happened to become a kind of a diary.

### Extended virtual reality – Second Life

Old dimensions are substituted by the virtual reality. It is a new field for experiments in art, a new dimension for an

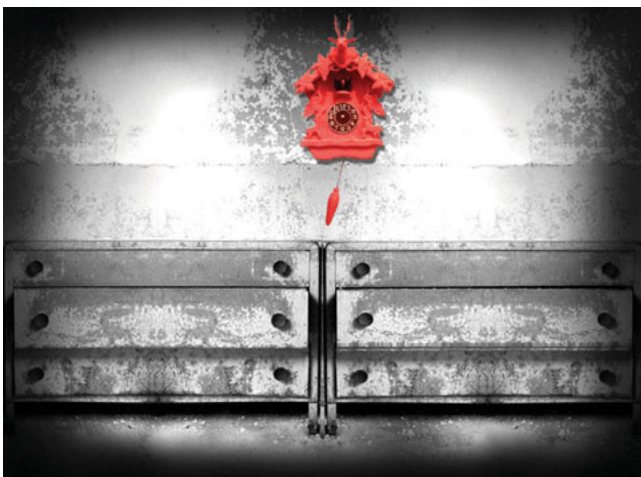


Fig. 6. Monika Cichocka, *Portfolio* (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska)



Fig. 8. Karolina Kiczmer, *Private duties* (courtesy of K. Kroczek-Wasińska)

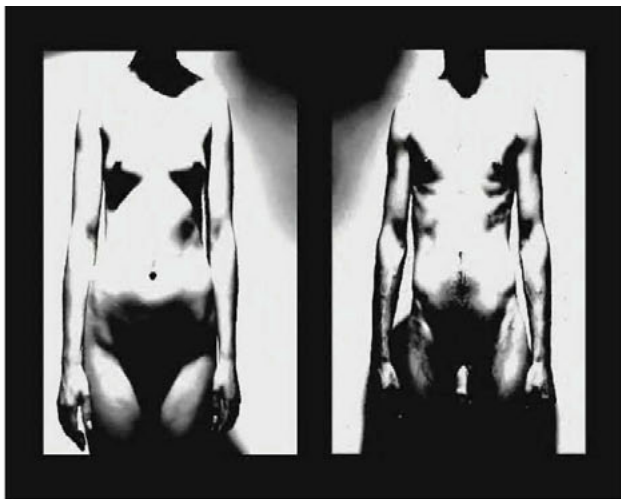
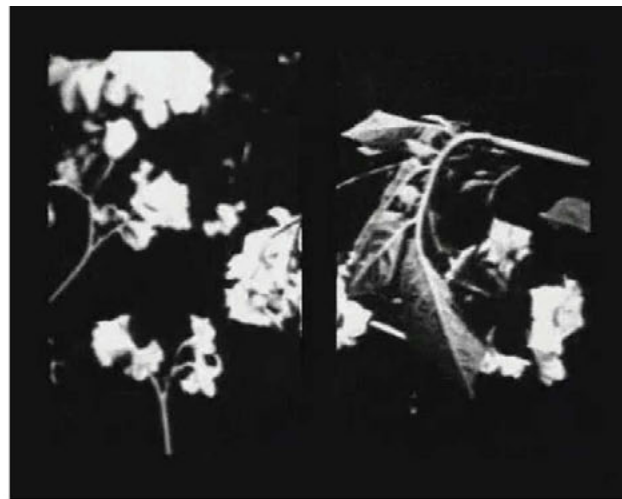


Fig. 7. Wojciech Pelc, *Black and White* (courtesy of K. Kroczyk-Wasińska)

artistic creation, which is based on building new realities. Designing a virtual dimension is sometimes limited to merely putting a real world into a new context. A new image "does not create an illusion, but stimulates reality, and the more realistic it becomes, the closer to the reality it is, and the more it loses its ability to create an artistic illusion"<sup>6</sup>.

Apart from unlimited artistic abilities a new dimension offers new educational opportunities. Created ideas find new soil, and this is one of the most important purposes in multimedia workshops. Again we can take action in order to explain the relation between art and perception, and processes happening in an aesthetic experience and communication in new conditions. The next one is the development of an artistic cooperation, which is obvious in a new dimension, because it is a public one. R.W. Kluszczyński thinks that the environment of the web "shapes and organizes relationship between the participants of an artistic affair. Thus, it is not the interactions, but their result – a created web of relationships – that is in the middle of its activity"<sup>7</sup>. The creation is enhanced with a community action then, and while taking into consideration an interactive relationship between participants, it is only possible through cooperation.

Technological development, which can be observed over the last years, has changed forms and methods of distance learning to a large extent. An opportunity of bidirectional communication plus contact with the audience and an opportunity to verify knowledge and acquired skills, have substantially contributed to a new form of education called e-learning. The field of e-learning has been developing dynamically as it is a very convenient form which is attractive in use and transfer of knowledge based not only on text information but on multimedia as well. This form of learning has got many advantages, however, a number of disadvantages can be listed as well. It is, among others, a lack of opportunities for complete interaction among students participating in



this process of education, which is particularly visible in relations observed unconsciously during group work in the real background of the classroom. Difficulties derived from limitations of e-learning and its traditional techniques are mainly noticeable in art education, which depends largely on a master-student relation. It seems that an implementation of virtual reality in didactics might be a technical solution to disadvantages mentioned earlier. This form permits the use of visual and verbal techniques of communication. Virtual reality used in education enables teachers to catch and keep young people's attention. In addition, it gives an opportunity for support in active learning. Implementation of virtual environments can change more a style of learning than activities in the frame of formal structure in the classroom. The paper describes techniques and methods of virtual reality which are certainly worth implementing in art education.

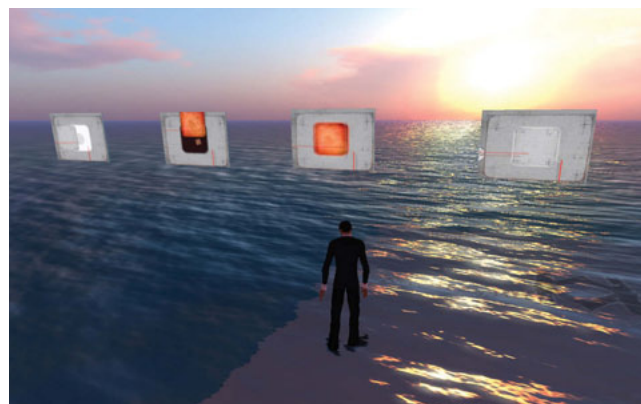


Fig. 9. E-mobius (Second Life screenshot, courtesy of K. Kroczyk-Wasińska)

- <sup>1</sup> R.W. KLUSZCZYŃSKI: *Sztuka interaktywna. Od dzieła instrumentu do interaktywnego spektaklu*. Warszawa 2010, p. 33.
- <sup>2</sup> L. MANOVICH: *Język nowych mediów*. Warszawa 2006, p. 38.
- <sup>3</sup> P. WELLS: *Animacja*. Warszawa 2009, p. 24.
- <sup>4</sup> A. MARKOWSKA: *Człowiek wybiera medium*. I forum „Czas na interdyscyplinarność”. Cieszyn 2005, p. 33.
- <sup>5</sup> R.W. KLUSZCZYŃSKI: *Sztuka interaktywna...*, p. 36.
- <sup>6</sup> G. SZTABIŃSKI: *Nauka, sztuka i sens oporu*. „Format” 2006, no. 49, p. 5.
- <sup>7</sup> R.W. KLUSZCZYŃSKI: *Sztuka interaktywna...*, p. 255.

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## Miksowanie przestrzeni

### Streszczenie

Prezentowane działania dotyczą poszukiwania nowych metod dydaktycznych związanych z kształceniem nauczycieli na kierunku edukacja artystyczna w zakresie sztuk plastycznych, realizowanym na Uniwersytecie Śląskim w Katowicach w Instytucie Sztuki w Cieszynie. Aktualna sytuacja sztuki charakteryzuje się dużą złożonością, która spowodowana jest z jednej strony kontekstem teoretycznym modernizmu i inwazją kultury popularnej, a z drugiej – pojawieniem się w sztuce nowych mediów, takich jak: plastyczne działania intermedialne i multimedialne, art netu oraz zróżnicowanych praktyk artystycznych. Nowa rzeczywistość stawia nowe zadania przed nauczycielami. Przygotowując ich do zawodu, nie należy zapominać o złożoności tego problemu i ograniczać się jedynie do działań warsztatowych i historii sztuki (wartości poszczególnych dzieł). Interdyscyplinarne podejście do uczestnictwa w kulturze wizualnej wydaje się najbardziej słusznym rozwiązaniem. Przykładem działań interdyscyplinarnych są nowe standardy kształcenia nauczycieli w Polsce, które koncentrują się na szeroko rozumianych kategoriach tematycznych, np. człowiek i media, a w mniejszym stopniu opisują techniki plastyczne. Dyskurs prowadzony na uniwersytetach, zajmujących się kształceniem nauczycieli, zmierza do poszukiwania nowych koncepcji i metod, które pozwoliłyby na edukację dostosowaną do wymogów i potrzeb współczesnego świata.

Zespół nauczycieli Katedry Interdyscyplinarnej Kreacji Artystycznej podejmuje szereg działań edukacyjno-artystycznych. W ich ramach wykorzystywane są zarówno tradycyjne narzędzia i techniki, jak również rzeczywistość wirtualna i rzeczywistość rozszerzona. Artykuł prezentuje kilkanaście warsztatów zrealizowanych na Uniwersytecie Śląskim

w Cieszynie, a także w ramach międzynarodowych projektów, takich jak Lifelong Learning Programme w Austrii, Czechach i we Włoszech.

**Słowa kluczowe:** działania warsztatowe, multimedia, intermedia, rzeczywistość wirtualna

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## Mixování prostoru

### Shrnutí

Prezentované činnosti se týkají hledání nových didaktických metod spojených se vzděláváním učitelů v oboru uměleckého vzdělávání v oblasti výtvarného umění, uskutečňovaného ve Slezské univerzitě v Katovicích, na katedře umění v Cieszyně. Aktuální situace umění je charakterizována vysokou komplexností, která je na jedné straně způsobena teoretickým kontextem modernismu a invazí populární kultury, na druhé straně vznikem nových médií v umění, jako jsou: plastické intermedialní a multimediální činnosti, art net a dále různorodé umělecké praktiky. Nová skutečnost staví před učitele nové úkoly. Při jejich přípravě k povolání nelze zapomínat na komplexnost tohoto problému a omezovat se pouze na workshopové činnosti a dějiny umění (hodnotu jednotlivých děl). Interdisciplinární přístup k účasti ve vizuální kultuře se zdá být nejsprávnějším řešením. Příkladem interdisciplinárních činností jsou nové standardy vzdělávání učitelů v Polsku, které se soustředí na široce chápané tematické kategorie, např. člověk a média, v menší míře popisují výtvarné techniky. Diskurz uplatňovaný na univerzitách, které se zabývají vzděláváním učitelů, směřuje k hledání nových koncepcí a metod, které by umožnily vzdělávání přizpůsobené požadavkům a potřebám současného světa.

Skupina učitelů Katedry interdisciplinární umělecké tvorby provádí řadu edukačně-uměleckých činností. V jejich rámci jsou využívány tradiční nástroje a techniky, stejně jako virtuální realita a rozšířená realita. Článek prezentuje téměř dvacítu workshopů uskutečněných ve Slezské univerzitě v Cieszyně a také v rámci mezinárodních projektů, jako jsou Lifelong Learning Programme v Rakousku, Česku a v Itálii.

**Klíčová slova:** workshopy, multimedia, intermedia, virtuální realita